

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 2, 2014

677

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
450 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As the Federal Communications Commission explores ways to modernize the E-rate Program, we write in support of maintaining web hosting as a Priority One service within the program, which continues to provide substantial benefits to students, parents and school faculty across the country.

School based websites, supported by web hosting services have become dynamic hubs where schools perform critical educational functions. These websites have become the medium school districts utilize for wide spread community engagement, emergency communication, digital learning and parental involvement.

Just as broadband access has provided the infrastructure required to support digital learning, web hosting plays a critical role enabling schools to truly connect to an online educational experience, providing around the clock access to digital learning. Perhaps more than any other service, web hosting helps to further stimulate broadband adoption and deliver a greater educational return on broadband investments. In fact, in a recent survey of more than 200 K – 12 school district administrators, 100 percent indicated that web hosting should remain funded as a Priority One Service within the E-rate program.

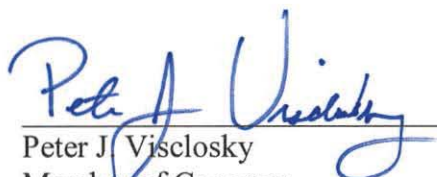
Although web hosting nationally only accounts for 1% of total E-rate Program funds, it delivers an impact far beyond actual costs. At just pennies per student per week, web hosting is one of the most cost-effective and highest-impact services funded by E-rate. Due to the very limited nature of school budgets, the elimination of web hosting as a Priority One service within the E-rate Program would create significant financial hardships for school districts because they will need to find additional resources to pay for their non-discounted share of broadband services.

For these many reasons, we believe any effort to alter the way that web hosting is currently treated within the E-rate Program would undermine the intended goals of the program and the FCC's long term broadband goals. Therefore, we respectfully request that moving forward you continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure that web hosting remains a Priority One service. We look forward to your timely reply.

Sincerely,


Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress


G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

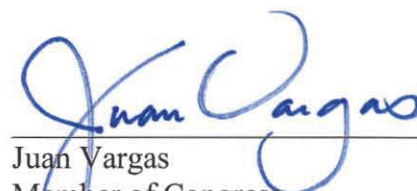

Peter J. Visclosky
Member of Congress



Bill Shuster
Member of Congress


Mike Kelly
Member of Congress


Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Juan Vargas
Member of Congress


Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

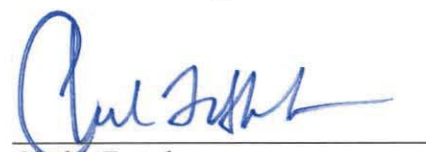

Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress


Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress


Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress


Steve Cohen
Member of Congress


Lou Barletta
Member of Congress


Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 22, 2014

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
U.S. House of Representatives
124 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Thompson:

Thank you for your letter expressing support for the schools and libraries universal service support program, known as the E-rate program, and the Commission's efforts to modernize the program. Your letter urges the Commission to continue funding web hosting as a priority one service within the E-rate program on the basis that web hosting plays a critical role in enabling schools to perform critical educational functions, such as community engagement, emergency communications, digital learning, and parental involvement. I agree that web hosting services are a valuable tool for school districts today and will continue to be after the Commission takes steps to modernize the program. The issue we face is how best to prioritize the limited E-rate dollars so that all schools have the necessary underlying broadband connectivity.

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The *Order* adopted by the Commission at our July Open Meeting takes significant steps to address the Wi-Fi gap in America's schools. In addition to funds already available for this purpose, the *Order* utilizes savings associated with transitioning support from non-broadband services to broadband. Given that 40 percent of classrooms are not currently Wi-Fi-enabled, and nearly two-thirds of schools indicate that they do not have sufficient Wi-Fi capacity to meet their digital learning needs, it is critically important that we focus our limited program resources on connectivity, not just to the school or library, but to the student or library patron.

Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler



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July 22, 2014

The Honorable Lou Barletta
U.S. House of Representatives
115 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Barletta:

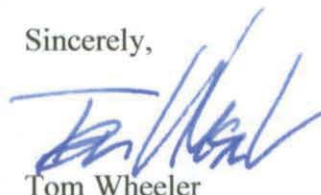
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July 22, 2014

The Honorable Robert Brady
U.S. House of Representatives
102 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Brady:

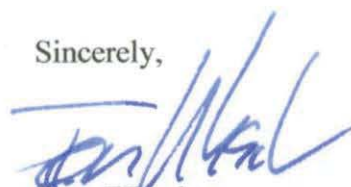
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OFFICE OF
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July 22, 2014

The Honorable G.K. Butterfield
U.S. House of Representatives
2305 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Butterfield:

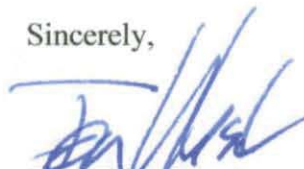
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July 22, 2014

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
U.S. House of Representatives
1419 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cartwright:

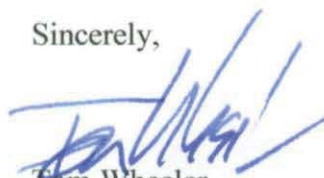
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
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July 22, 2014

The Honorable Steve Cohen
U.S. House of Representatives
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cohen:

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July 22, 2014

The Honorable Eliot Engel
U.S. House of Representatives
2161 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Engel:

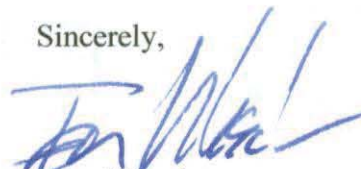
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July 22, 2014

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
U.S. House of Representatives
2301 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Fattah:

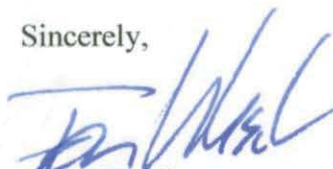
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
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July 22, 2014

The Honorable Mike Kelly
U.S. House of Representatives
1519 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kelly:

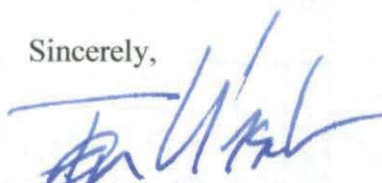
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The Honorable Scott Peters
U.S. House of Representatives
2410 Rayburn House Office Building
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Dear Congressman Peters:

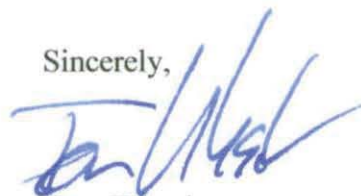
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July 22, 2014

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
U.S. House of Representatives
1318 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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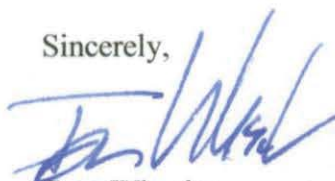
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July 22, 2014

The Honorable Carol Shea-Porter
U.S. House of Representatives
1530 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Shea-Porter:

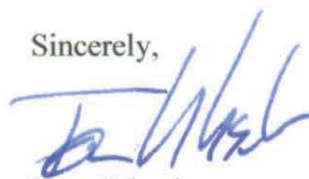
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Prior to the changes we adopted on July 11th, approximately half of the program dollars went to non-broadband activities, including web hosting. In order to maximize funding for the principle goal – broadband access – the new rules are phasing out support for non-broadband services. Schools need this broadband to take advantage of digital learning technologies, and libraries need to provide their patrons with high-speed access to the Internet. I recognize that the E-rate program has previously supported a variety of services, such as web hosting. However, I firmly believe that, in order to meet educational needs, the E-rate program must place a priority on ensuring that every school in America has a high-speed broadband connection and high-speed Wi-Fi in every classroom, and we must allocate funds accordingly.

The *Order* adopted by the Commission at our July Open Meeting takes significant steps to address the Wi-Fi gap in America's schools. In addition to funds already available for this purpose, the *Order* utilizes savings associated with transitioning support from non-broadband services to broadband. Given that 40 percent of classrooms are not currently Wi-Fi-enabled, and nearly two-thirds of schools indicate that they do not have sufficient Wi-Fi capacity to meet their digital learning needs, it is critically important that we focus our limited program resources on connectivity, not just to the school or library, but to the student or library patron.

Thank you again for your interest in this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 22, 2014

The Honorable Bill Shuster
U.S. House of Representatives
2209 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Shuster:

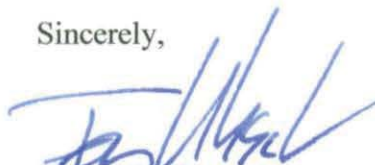
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 22, 2014

The Honorable Juan Vargas
U.S. House of Representatives
1605 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Vargas:

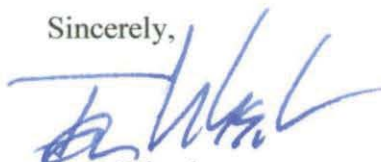
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 22, 2014

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
U.S. House of Representatives
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Visclosky:

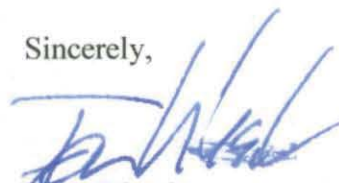
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